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The Investigation of Block-Eight Scheduling in Illinois High Schools

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether principals believed that the implementation of block-eight scheduling in Illinois high schools had an impact on improved student achievement (specifically the A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores), attendance, and discipline.

The results of this study should provide needed information to those school districts in Illinois that are contemplating the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling in their high schools.

The study involved a survey of principals of 160 high schools selected at random throughout Illinois. The school population of these districts ranged from 100 students to over 1,000 students. These school districts were located in rural, suburban, and inner city areas. The survey took place during the spring of 1997. One hundred and ten principals returned the survey for a response rate of 69 %. Twenty-two principals reported that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling.

The specific research questions addressed by the study were:

1. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student achievement?

2. To what extent do principals believe that high school student achievement improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

3. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student A.C.T. test scores?

4. To what extent do principals believe that high school student A.C.T. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

5. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the

purpose of improving student I.G.A.P. test scores?

6. To what extent do principals believe that high school student I.G.A.P. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

7. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student attendance?

8. To what extent do principals believe that high school student attendance improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

9. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student discipline?

10. To what extent do principals believe that high school student discipline improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

Among the findings of this study from the 22 principals whose schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling were the following:

1. One hundred percent of principals indicated that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling to improve student achievement.

2. Seventy-seven percent of principals indicated that student achievement had improved following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling.

3. Ninety-five percent of principals indicated that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling to improve student A.C.T. test scores.

4. Ninety-five percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that student A.C.T. test scores had improved following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling.

5. Ninety-five percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling to improve student I.G.A.P. test

scores.

6. Ninety-five percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that student I.G.A.P. test scores had improved following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling.

7. Seventy-seven percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling to improve student attendance.

8. Seventy-three percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that student attendance had improved following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling.

9. Sixty-nine percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling to improve student discipline.

10. Eighty-seven percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that student discipline had improved following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling.

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Chapter 1

Overview of the Problem

Background

Improving our school system is a topic that many are concerned about. Illinois educators and administrators want to know specifically how to improve student achievement on the American College Testing Program (A.C.T.) and Illinois Goal Assessment Program (I.G.A.P.) test scores, attendance, and discipline. One approach to school improvement would be to introduce the new concept of block-eight scheduling or flexible scheduling for the purpose of improving student achievement (specifically A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores), attendance, and discipline.

School systems and educators are continually seeking better ways to educate students. With the constant demands put on our schools by society and by families, many problems have developed. Student behavior, poor attendance, and a high rate of failure among students are severe problems that schools face on a daily basis; hence the search for alternative methods to school improvement via the concept of block-eight scheduling.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine whether principals believed that the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling in Illinois high schools had an impact on improved student achievement, specifically A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores. The study also sought to ascertain if principals believed that the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling had an impact on student attendance and discipline.

The specific research questions addressed by the study were:

1. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student achievement?

2. To what extent do principals believe that high school student achievement improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

3. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student A.C.T. test scores?

4. To what extent do principals believe that high school student A.C.T. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

5. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student I.G.A.P. test scores?

6. To what extent do principals believe that high school student I.G.A.P. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

7. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student attendance?

8. To what extent do principals believe that high school student attendance improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

9. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student discipline?

10. To what extent do principals believe that high school student discipline improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that high school principals would have a data base to reference student achievement (specifically A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test

scores), attendance, and discipline.

Limitations

Only 160 high school principals in Illinois were selected to participate in this study because of finances and time limitations.

Delimitations

Factors left outside the scope of this study included in-service for teachers for implementation of block-eight scheduling; teaching strategies in block-eight scheduling; input from the students, teachers, school board members, and/or the community; the cost of implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling; and concerns about special education.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity, the following operational definitions were used in the study:

Attendance. The act or fact of attending a full school day by the student or number of students attending school.

Block-eight schedule. A form of flexible scheduling where all students take four classes per day with classes meeting on alternating days.

Conventional schedule. A schedule in which students meet all their classes on a given day of seven to ten class periods.

Discipline. Action taken by the school authorities against a student because his/her conduct fails to conform to school standards.

Evaluation. Assessing outcomes of one or more events, making judgments regarding effectiveness, and providing information that can shape future

decisions.

Flexible schedule. Any form of student scheduling that deviates from the traditional seven, eight, or nine class period day.

Goals. General statements of learning objectives.

Illinois Goal Assessment Program (I.G.A.P.). A program designed to measure the extent to which students in public schools in Illinois are meeting the State Goals for Learning.

In-service or staff development. Planned effort to enhance the job-related knowledge, attitude, and/or skills of staff in order to accomplish school/district goals and objectives.

Student achievement. Improvement in student learning as measured by overall grade point average and standardized test scores.

The American College Testing Program (A.C.T.). A program which includes four curriculum-based tests that measure students' educational development in English, mathematics, reading, and science.

Chapter 2

Rationale and Review of Literature and Research

The purpose of this study was to determine whether principals believed that the implementation of block-eight scheduling in Illinois high schools had an impact on improved student achievement, specifically A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores. The study also sought to ascertain if principals believed that the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling had an impact on student attendance and discipline.

The specific research questions addressed by the study were:

1. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student achievement?

2. To what extent do principals believe that high school student achievement improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

3. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving the student A.C.T. test scores?

4. To what extent do principals believe that high school student A.C.T. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

5. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student I.G.A.P. test scores?

6. To what extent do principals believe that high school student I.G.A.P. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

7. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student attendance?

8. To what extent do principals believe that high school student attendance

improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

9. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student discipline?

10. To what extent do principals believe that high school student discipline improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

Rationale

Changes in society and family values have created more problems for schools. Disruptive student behavior, poor student attendance, high rates of failure among students, and general student apathy are problems in today's educational environment.

The rationale for this study was predicated on the fact that block-eight scheduling was working in those school districts that had implemented it. According to Canady and Rettig (1995b) any improvement in student achievement (specifically the A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores), attendance, and discipline could be attributed to the conversion to block-eight scheduling in high schools.

Review of Literature and Research

The beginning of the twentieth century brought many changes to the school system. One-room schools were being closed with the expansion of towns and cities. After World War II when the military personnel came home from the war, there was an exodus of the population from the cities to the suburbs. This caused a change from the one-room country schools to the multi-room and multi-teacher suburban schools. With the mass movement to the city schools, class schedules were redesigned. The new scheduling included six to ten class periods with a teacher teaching more specific subject areas in contrast to the one-room schools where teachers taught all subject

matters (Canady & Rettig, 1995a).

The first school in Illinois to use block-eight scheduling was Seneca High School, Seneca, Illinois, in 1987. It was initially perceived that block-eight scheduling was only good for the smaller rural schools. Another perception was that block-eight scheduling required additional teachers in order to teach new courses added to the schedule (Canady & Rettig, 1995b).

Canady and Rettig (1996) have identified five types of block schedules. In one type, the block-four schedule, students spend four blocks in four subjects a day for the full semester. The students usually have three academic courses on a daily basis. The fourth class block could be physical education, music, band, and/or exploratory courses. A second type of block schedule is the 75-75-30 block schedule. With this plan students follow the regular schedule for the first 150 days. The courses end after two 75 day terms. Students begin their final six weeks of school enrolled in specialized courses created and designed by the teachers. A third type of block schedule is the concept-progress model. This model is another attempt to address students' differing needs for learning time. Teachers monitor and adjust instruction during this time, providing enrichment and additional assistance as needed. A fourth type of block schedule is the trimester plan with daily periods for extended learning. In this plan, students enroll in two classes per trimester. Each class meets two hours in the morning and reconvenes for an additional 45 minutes of extended learning time each afternoon. The fifth type of block schedule is the block-eight schedule. The block-eight schedule provides students with four classes a day for 85 to 95 minutes a period. These classes alternate every other day and are called "A" days and "B" days. For example, on an "A" day a student would have

math, science, physical education, and social studies classes, and on a "B" day the same student would have art, industrial arts, music, and English.

As indicated by O'Neal (1995), in a traditional schedule, students race from one 50 minute class to another, attending six to ten classes with six to ten different teachers in a single day. Teachers rush to get through the period's objectives before the bell rings, often running out of time just as the class gets under way. With 125 or more students to teach, teachers struggle to learn about their pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to provide individual attention.

Although there are many arguments for considering a move to block-eight scheduling, hard data on the effects are scarce. In general, research has found that teachers and students appreciate longer classes, and that students do at least as well on measures of academic achievement (O'Neal, 1995). Block-eight scheduling is more flexible, allowing teachers more time to accommodate students' different learning needs (O'Neal, 1995). Research indicates that grades are sufficiently higher in those schools which have implemented block-eight scheduling. One study indicated that the percentage of "A" grades earned by students rose from 21 % to 32 % of grades given (Edwards, 1995).

Educators at Orange County High School in California and other high schools using block-eight scheduling believe that the simplicity and flexibility of this type of scheduling promotes greater learning while students are in school and allows greater opportunities for them as they move into higher education and employment (Edwards, 1995).

Orange County High School teamed up with local employers to publish career

entry profiles. During the first three years of high school, students work to acquire marketable skills and to demonstrate appropriate attendance and work ethic (Edwards, 1995).

Skyline High School in Longmont, Colorado, scrapped its conventional semester calendar for a new block-eight class schedule (Stumpf, 1995). The block-eight schedule has proven to be uncommonly successful for students, teachers, administrators, and parents alike. They enjoy fewer and longer classes each day, impressively reduced class sizes, and more free time for teachers and flexibility for students, all of which have translated into improved student achievement, attendance, and discipline.

The results of a study by Stumpf (1995) indicated that there was a 1 % decrease in the number of "A's" and a 1.8 % decrease in the number of "F's" after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling. Research has indicated that the student drop-out rate, in-school and out-of-school suspensions, and daily attendance have sufficiently improved when implementing or converting to block-eight scheduling (Stumpf, 1995). Following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling, teachers also have more time for active student engagement in the form of laboratories, small groups, and presentations (Stumpf, 1995).

Since Wasson High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, adopted block-eight scheduling in 1990, daily attendance, the percentage of pupils making the honor roll and eventually enrolling in four-year colleges, and the number of course credits earned by students are all higher (O'Neal, 1995).

Seven schools that had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling were surveyed by the Harvard team for student attendance, suspension rates, and dropout

rates (Fogarty, 1996). Student attendance was not spectacular, but it was positive, with four schools showing improved student attendance, two showing declines, and one showing no change. Four of the five high schools that were able to provide suspension data for two years showed reductions in the rate of suspensions, ranging from reductions of 25 % to 75 % during the first two years. The dropout rate reported by six of the seven high schools showed reductions ranging from 17 % to 63 % (Fogarty, 1996).

According to Canady and Rettig (1995b), those schools on block-eight scheduling encourage teachers to break away from the normal classroom lecture teaching style. They are encouraged to use cooperative learning strategies, to review concepts, to use guided practice, and to allow for guided study time, which result in increased student attendance and decreased suspension rates and dropout rates.

According to Canady and Rettig (1995b) additional advantages of block-eight scheduling include a decrease in discipline problems and an increase in instructional time due to fewer class changes per day. Though teachers have more daily preparation time, they only have three or four classes to prepare for daily. Though students see their teachers only every other day, they spend more quality time together, thus allowing for better interaction.

Many disciplinary referrals result from scheduled transitions when large numbers of students spill into hallways, lunchrooms, and commons areas, or congregate in locker rooms and bathrooms. If students are not sent to the office directly, the problems often carry over into the classrooms where teachers must deal with them before beginning instruction (Canady & Rettig, 1995b). Any principal in charge of discipline will verify that a preponderance of disciplinary referrals emanate from scheduled transitions when

large numbers of students spill into the hallways, congregate in lunch rooms and common areas, or are herded into locker rooms to change clothes for physical education classes (Canady & Rettig, 1995b). The assembly-line traditional period scheduling contributes to the depersonalizing nature of high schools. When teachers are responsible for 100 to 180 students daily, and students must answer to six to ten teachers a day, it is nearly impossible to develop close relationships, which may contribute to increased discipline problems (Canady & Rettig, 1995b). Short instructional periods may also contribute to a negative classroom climate. When students who misbehave do not respond to a quick correction, many teachers send them to the office. With only 40 to 55 minute class periods, these teachers view any time taken away from class work as unacceptable. During many periods of the day, 20 % of the students are off task (Candy & Rettig, 1995b).

Student discipline problems have dropped at many of the schools using block-eight scheduling. Tom DeBolt, formerly the principal at Pulaski High School in Pulaski, Virginia, stated that student disciplinary infractions at the school actually decreased after the new block-eight schedule was enacted (O'Neal, 1995). Mr. Schoenstein, principal at Wasson High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, observed students and teachers at Wasson High School rushed from class to class contributing to a stressful climate under conventional scheduling. One result of block-eight schedule at Wasson High School has been a calmer pace, fewer fights, and less vandalism (O'Neal, 1995).

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

General Design

The purpose of this study was to determine whether principals believed that the implementation of block-eight scheduling in Illinois high schools had an impact on improved student achievement, specifically A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores. The study also sought to ascertain if the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling had an impact on student attendance and discipline.

The specific research questions addressed by the study were:

1. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student achievement?

2. To what extent do principals believe that high school student achievement improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

3. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student A.C.T. test scores?

4. To what extent do principals believe that high school student A.C.T. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

5. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student I.G.A.P. test scores?

6. To what extent do principals believe that high school student I.G.A.P. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

7. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student attendance?

8. To what extent do principals believe that high school student attendance improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

9. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student discipline?

10. To what extent do principals believe that high school student discipline improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

Sample and Population

One hundred and sixty high school principals in Illinois were asked to participate in this study. The principals were selected at random from rural, suburban, and city areas. The researcher used the Illinois High School Association Member School Directory, 1995-96 edition, as a resource for selecting the high school principals to participate in the block-eight scheduling study. The exception to this selection was the city of Chicago where only one high school was selected.

High school principals were asked if they had implemented or converted their high schools to block-eight scheduling in order to improve their school's student achievement (specifically the A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores), attendance, and discipline.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The survey contained questions for block-eight scheduling. It contained questions with regard to students' performance in academic achievement (specifically the A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores), attendance, and discipline. The research questions correlate with the survey item numbers. By way of illustration, research question 1 is answered by survey question 1.

The survey to obtain data for this study was developed by the researcher (see

Appendix A). The survey was sent to principals of high schools selected for the study together with a cover letter (see Appendix B).

Teachers and principals from the researchers school district were given copies of the survey. They were asked to complete the survey, make corrections, and return it to the researcher. This task was performed to ensure the reliability of the survey. Block-eight scheduling is a new concept and many questions were unanswered. The validity of the survey was based on questions that the surveyor gathered while reading articles and books on block-eight scheduling. In order to answer some of these question, the researcher designed the block-eight scheduling survey (see Appendix A).

Data Analysis

The surveys were mailed to selected high school principals on March 1, 1997, with a return self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed. All responses were received by April 30, 1997. The results were tallied and presented in tables with numbers and percentages.

Chapter 4

Results of the Study

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine whether principals believed that the implementation of block-eight scheduling in Illinois high schools had an impact on improved student achievement, specifically the A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores. The study also sought to ascertain if the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling had an impact on student attendance and discipline.

The specific research questions addressed by the study were:

1. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student achievement?

2. To what extent do principals believe that high school student achievement improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

3. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving the student A.C.T. test scores?

4. To what extent do principals believe that high school student A.C.T. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

5. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student I.G.A.P. test scores?

6. To what extent do principals believe that high school student I.G.A.P. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

7. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student attendance?

8. To what extent do principals believe that high school student attendance improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

9. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student discipline?

10. To what extent do principals believe that high school student discipline improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

Of the 160 surveys mailed to high school principals, 110 returned them representing a response rate of 69 %. Of the 110 principals surveyed, 22 principals (20 %) reported that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling. The data from these surveys were analyzed. The 88 surveys returned indicating the schools had no block-scheduling, provided no relevant data for this study, and were excluded from analysis.

Results for Research Question 1

Principals were asked if their high schools had implemented block-eight scheduling to improve student achievement. Principals of all 22 high schools that had implemented block-eight scheduling strongly agreed or agreed that they did so to improve student achievement, as indicated in Table 1.

Results for Research Question 2

Principals were asked to what extent they believed that student achievement improved after their high schools had implemented block-eight scheduling. As indicated in Table 2, 77 % of those principals responding to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that student achievement did improve after the schedule was changed, 18 % were undecided about changes in student achievement, and 5 % (one principal) did not believe that student

Table 1

Implemented or Converted to Block-Eight Scheduling to Improve Student Achievement

Level of principal agreement	Number of Schools	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	64 %
Agree	8	36 %
Undecided	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Table 2

Student Achievement Improved After Implementation or Conversion to Block-Eight Scheduling

Level of principal agreement	Number of Schools	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	32 %
Agree	10	45 %
Undecided	4	18 %
Disagree	1	5 %
Strongly Disagree	0	0

achievement had improved.

Results for Research Question 3

Principals were asked if their high schools had implemented block-eight scheduling to improve student A.C.T. test scores. As indicated in Table 3, 95 % of those principals responding to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that they did so to improve student A.C.T. test scores, while one principal did not implement block-eight scheduling to improve students A.C.T. test scores.

Table 3

Implemented or Converted to Block-Eight Scheduling to Improve Student A.C.T. Test Scores

Level of principal agreement	Number of Schools	Percentage
Strongly Agree	10	45 %
Agree	11	50 %
Undecided	0	0
Disagree	1	5 %
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Results for Research Question 4

Principals were asked to what extent they believed that student A.C.T. test scores improved after their high schools had implemented block-eight scheduling. As indicated in Table 4, 95 % of those principals responding to the survey strongly agreed or agreed

that student A.C.T. test scores did improve after the schedule was changed, while one principal did not believe that student A.C.T. test scores had improved.

Table 4

Student A.C.T. Test Scores Improved After Implementation or Conversion to Block-Eight Scheduling

Level of principal agreement	Number of Schools	Percentage
Strongly Agree	10	45 %
Agree	11	50 %
Undecided	0	0
Disagree	1	5 %
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Results for Research Question 5

Principals were asked if their high schools had implemented block-eight scheduling to improve student I.G.A.P. test scores. As indicated in Table 5, 95 % of those principals responding to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that they did so to improve student I.G.A.P. test scores, while one principal did not implement block-eight scheduling to improve student I.G.A.P. test scores.

Results for Research Question 6

Principals were asked if they believed that student I.G.A.P. test scores had improved after their high schools implemented block-eight scheduling. As indicated in

Table 5

Implemented or Converted to Block-Eight Scheduling to Improve Student I.G.A.P. Test Scores

Level of principal agreement	Number of Schools	Percentage
Strongly Agree	10	45 %
Agree	11	50 %
Undecided	0	0
Disagree	1	5 %
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Table 6, 95 % of those principals responding to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that student I.G.A.P. test scores did improve after the schedule was changed, while one principal did not believe that student I.G.A.P. test scores had improved.

Results for Research Question 7

Principals were asked if their high schools had implemented block-eight scheduling to improve student attendance. As indicated in Table 7, 77 % of those principals responding to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that they did so to improve student attendance, 18 % disagreed or strongly disagreed that the change to block-eight scheduling was made to improve student attendance, while one principal was undecided about this matter.

Table 6

Student I.G.A.P. Test Scores Improved After Implementation or Conversion to Block-Eight Scheduling

Level of principal agreement	Number of Schools	Percentage
Strongly Agree	10	45 %
Agree	11	50 %
Undecided	0	0
Disagree	1	5 %
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Table 7

Implemented or Converted to Block-Eight Scheduling to Improve Student Attendance

Level of principal agreement	Number of Schools	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	13 %
Agree	14	64 %
Undecided	1	5 %
Disagree	1	5 %
Strongly Disagree	3	13 %

Results for Research Question 8

Principals were asked if they believed that student attendance had improved after their high schools implemented block-eight scheduling. As indicated in Table 8, 73 % of those principals responding to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that student attendance did improve after the schedule was changed, 13 % were undecided about changes in student attendance, and 14 % disagreed or strongly disagreed that student attendance had improved.

Table 8

Student Attendance Improved After Implementation or Conversion to Block-Eight Scheduling

Level of principal agreement	Number of Schools	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	9 %
Agree	14	64 %
Undecided	3	13 %
Disagree	1	5 %
Strongly Disagree	2	9 %

Results for Research Question 9

Principals were asked if their high schools had implemented block-eight scheduling to improve student discipline. As indicated in Table 9, 69 % of those principals responding to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that they did so to improve student

Table 9

Implemented or Converted to Block-Eight Scheduling to Improve Student Discipline

Level of principal agreement	Number of Schools	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	5 %
Agree	14	64 %
Undecided	3	13 %
Disagree	2	9 %
Strongly Disagree	2	9 %

Table 10

Student Discipline Improved After Implementation or Conversion to Block-Eight Scheduling

Level of principal agreement	Number of Schools	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	15 %
Agree	16	72 %
Undecided	1	5 %
Disagree	3	13 %
Strongly Disagree	1	5 %

discipline, 13 % were undecided about changes in student discipline, and 18 % disagree or strongly disagree that student discipline had improved.

Results for Research Question 10

Principals were asked to what extent they believed that student discipline had improved after their high schools implemented block-eight scheduling. As indicated in Table 10, 87 % of those principals responding to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that student discipline did improve after the schedule was changed, 5 % were undecided about changes in student discipline, and 18 % did not believe that student discipline had improved after the implementation of block-eight scheduling.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine weather principals believed that the implementation of block-eight scheduling in Illinois high schools had an impact on improved student achievement, specifically A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores. The study also sought to ascertain if the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling had an impact on student attendance and discipline.

The specific research questions addressed by the study were:

1. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student achievement?

2. To what extent do principals believe that high school student achievement improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

3. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student A.C.T. test scores?

4. To what extent do principals believe that high school student A.C.T. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

5. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student I.G.A.P. test scores?

6. To what extent do principals believe that high school student I.G.A.P. test scores improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

7. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student attendance?

8. To what extent do principals believe that high school student attendance improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

9. Did the high schools implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student discipline?

10. To what extent do principals believe that high school student discipline improved after the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

One hundred and sixty high school principals were sent a copy of the survey. One hundred and ten (69 %) of the principals returned the survey. Twenty-two of those principals indicated that their school had already implemented block-eight scheduling.

The data from these surveys were analyzed. The 88 surveys returned indicating the schools had no block scheduling, provided no relevant data from this study, and were excluded from analysis.

Findings

Among the findings of this study from the 22 principals whose schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling were the following:

1. One hundred percent of principals indicated that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling to improve student achievement.

2. Seventy-seven percent of principals indicated that student achievement had improved following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling.

3. Ninety-five percent of principals indicated that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling to improve student A.C.T. test scores.

4. Ninety-five percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that student A.C.T. test scores had improved following the implementation or conversion to block-eight

scheduling.

5. Ninety-five percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling to improve student I.G.A.P. test scores.

6. Ninety-five percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that student I.G.A.P. test scores had improved following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling.

7. Seventy-seven percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling to improve student attendance.

8. Seventy-three percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that student attendance had improved following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling.

9. Sixty-nine percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that their schools had implemented or converted to block-eight scheduling to improve student discipline.

10. Eighty-seven percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed that student discipline had improved following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling.

Conclusion

Conclusions based upon this study are that student achievement (specifically A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores), attendance, and discipline improved with the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling.

Recommendations

Following are recommendations of the researcher of this study:

1. High school principals of schools with traditional schedules who wish to improve student achievement (specifically A.C.T. and I.G.A.P. test scores) should consider block-eight schedules in their schools.

2. High school principals of schools with traditional schedules who wish to improve student attendance should consider block-eight schedules in their schools.

3. High school principals of schools with traditional schedules who wish to improve student discipline should consider block-eight schedules in their schools.

4. Other researchers interested in conducting a similar study on block-eight scheduling may wish to survey the opinions of the teachers, students, and/or citizens following the implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling..

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Appendix A

Block-Eight Scheduling Survey

The questions listed below are designed to answer these questions that many schools may have who are considering a switch to block-eight scheduling. School sizes and locations were picked at random.

Please circle appropriate answer:

1. Did the high school implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student achievement?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

2. Did the high school achievement improve after implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

3. Did the high school implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving A.C.T. test scores?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

4. Did the high school A.C.T. test scores improve after implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

5. Did the high school implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving I.G.A.P. test scores?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

6. Did the high school I.G.A.P. test scores improve after implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

7. Did the high school implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student attendance?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

8. Did the high school attendance improve after implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

9. Did the high school implement or convert to block-eight scheduling for the purpose of improving student discipline?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

10. Did the high school discipline improve after implementation or conversion to block-eight scheduling?

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

Appendix B

Cover Letter Sent to Principals

Bunker Hill High School
John E. Reif, Principal
314 S. Meissner St.
Bunker Hill, Il. 62014
(618)-585-3770

March 1, 1997

Dear Colleague:

I am conducting a survey on block-eight scheduling in order to complete my field study for my specialist degree at Eastern Illinois University. Please fill out the enclosed survey and return it to me at your earliest convenience. I will be happy to send a copy of the results of this survey to those who wish a copy.

Thank you for your time and assistance. A self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed to aid in the return of this survey.

Very truly,

John E. Reif